Amendment to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims (in order with strikethrough and underline):

Claim 1. (currently amended) A device for vacuum sealing a food item package formed from a web of material, the device comprising:

a first clam shell having a lip and a passage for supplying a vacuum to the lip;

a second clam shell having a lip and a passage for supply a vacuum to the lip;

a vacuum supply applied to each of the lips of the clam shells to engage the web <u>to form an air tight chamber</u>;

wherein the web and the first and second clam shells may be engaged so as to form an air tight chamber; and

~~a means for supplying~~ <u>an air supply for supplying</u> compressed air into the air tight chamber <u>such that the web does not disengage from the first and second clam shells</u>.

Claim 2. (Original) The device of claim 1 wherein the lips are curved.

Claim 3. (currently amended) The device of claim 1 further comprising at least one locking mechanism comprising:

a rotating axle;

a swing arm rigidly attached to the rotating axle;

a locking arm pivotally attached ~~tot eh~~ <u>to the</u> first <u>clam</u> ~~elaim~~ shell and the swing arm;

a second locking arm rotatably attached to the second clam ~~claim~~ shell in the swing arm;
and

such that when the rotating axis is rotated 180° the first clam shell and the second clam
shell are engaged to form an air tight chamber.

Claim 4. (currently amended) A method for vacuum sealing a food item package comprising:

enclosing a package portion of a food item packaging web within an air tight chamber;

~~a means for~~ maintaining fluid communication between the package portion and the
remainder of the web such that air from the package portion of the web may enter the remainder
of the web; and

supplying compressed air to the air tight chamber such that air within the package portion
of the web is forced into the remainder of the web <u>while maintaining an air tight chamber</u>.